

**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
City Hall, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Park Conference Room  
455 N. Main  
January 13, 2014  
3pm**

**Present:** Bryan Frye, Hoyt Hillman, Steve Hieger, Ron Allen, Cindy Claycomb

**Absent:** Tom Roth

**Also Present:** Doug Kupper, Director of Park and Recreation, Elizabeth Harlenske, City Assistant Attorney, Christina Butler, Clerk, John Philbrick, Troy Hendricks, Mark Lowry, City Staff, Elena Ingle, Michael Loop, Matthew Goolsby, James Clendenin, Craig Andres, Mark Wedman, Greg Farris, Johnny Stevens, Karen Smith, Citizens.

The meeting was called to order at approximately 3:00pm.

Kupper apologized for not getting the bylaw amendment on the January agenda. It will be on the February agenda.

**PUBLIC AGENDA**

None.

**REGULAR AGENDA**

**Item 1: Approval of Minutes**

Hillman noted that on the minutes related to the Watson train, it should be "24 seats" instead of "22 slots" as noted in the minutes. This will need to be corrected.

**Motion by Frye, second by Hillman, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to approve, sign and file corrected minutes of the December 16, 2013, Board of Park Commissioners Regular Meeting (5-0).**

**Item 2A: Request to Acquire Portion of Property Pertaining to Clapp Golf Course at Harry and Oliver (John Philbrick)**

Kupper stated that a company came forward suggesting an offer for a portion of Clapp golf course at the corner of Harry and Oliver and they approached the City Property Management Director.

Philbrick stated that an inquiry was received regarding the corner of Clapp at Harry and Oliver for approximately 90,000 square feet (approximately 300 x 300). He distributed a map of the area. He stated that Engineering reviewed the area and it will have to be extended to the west to get out of the right turn lane on Harry. The site is not in the floodway although there are some flood plain issues that Stormwater can deal with by mitigation and development. He stated that the question is "How does the Board want to move forward?" It is a part of Clapp Golf Course which is Park Board property.

Frye asked if there were questions for Philbrick.

Hillman asked if the corner is to accommodate a turn lane.

Philbrick stated that the corner as it exists today is just drawn. It is unplatted property and not a finite platted aspect. This is how it shows up on GIS for the soft turn. The site itself is not platted.

Hillman asked if it will be part of the 90,000 square feet.

Philbrick replied it would be. The site would be drawn to take into account the right-of-way needs that Engineering believes it will need and the 90,000 square feet will come out of that. The intersection was recently re-done.

Hillman asked Philbrick to tell the Board about the offer that was made.

Philbrick stated it was a solicitation of interest and there is no formal offer yet. It was notice that they are interested in acquiring a site of approximately 90,000 square feet and what the response would be.

Hillman stated that his response would be that he does not care for the plan unless sufficient income can be generated from the sale of the land to develop the golf course that has to be reconfigured and put funds towards a water source. He stated that this is the only park that does not have a water source to water greenways and the course. It depends entirely on drinking water. He is not sure if taxpayers want to do this in the future.

Frye noted that the Golf Committee had looked at this idea and asked if it was the same footprint they had looked at.

Hendricks replied that basically it is the same other than the driveway coming in off of Harry outside the existing turn lane. Engineering was concerned with turning from Oliver onto Harry across five lanes of traffic.

Frye stated that the Golf Committee was concerned that if they did consider the 90,000 square feet, they could still maintain the 18 holes. This footprint would still allow for that. He asked what the intended use would be and if they would consider a lease option.

Philbrick responded that it would be a retail use, but the name of the retailer was not to be disclosed yet. He was not sure about the lease option.

Frye asked if the land is owned by the Board of Park Commissioners.

Kupper responded the land is deeded and titled to the Board of Park Commissioners.

Claycomb asked if the cost to reconfigure the course would be the same as disclosed in the previous meeting for \$250-300,000.

Hendricks responded it would probably be closer to \$450-500,000.

Hieger asked if there was a prior precedence.

Frye responded there had been some recently, but not on a golf course. He noted the Southlakes

property where they did an exchange.

Kupper added this was the complete opposite of the Southlakes property because the land at Southlakes was buffer land that probably would not have been developed whereas the Clapp land is the highest and best use of the land as a golf course.

Allen asked about the timeframe.

Philbrick responded that it depends on how the Park Board wants to move forward. It could be a short process and is up to the Board.

Claycomb asked how long it would take to have the golf course reconfigured.

Hendricks responded that they would want to bring someone in who is familiar with rerouting courses and come up with plans. The construction could start the first of August in order to seed the greens prior to the first frost. It would be beneficial to do it late in the year and they would be out of commission through the fall and into the spring. They would look to keep the par the same as it is currently.

Frye stated that when the Golf Committee previously asked about this, they were told it could remain an 18 hole, par 70 course.

Kupper stated they would have to ask if this could be drafted so that one of these greens may or may not be impacted. There would probably be a tee box in the center of the proposed commercial building. He stated that his staff could probably do a good job of it with the great people he has working in the golf enterprise. But in order to make it a quality playing condition behind the structure, they would like to hire someone to look at it a little closer.

Frye stated that Clapp has been on the radar over the last couple of years and there have been significant investments made in marketing and developing all of the courses. He felt that as Board of Park Commissioners they have to review objectively all opportunities because they have a responsibility to the tax payers to make sure they are maximizing the resources. He asked the Board to listen objectively. They are at a listening point at this time. There are no decisions being made and there is not even an offer. He just wanted to put that on the table so everyone understands where they are at this point.

Elena Ingle (3608 Meadow Lane) stated she lives four blocks west of Clapp Park. She feels that Clapp Park is too small to get rid of any of this space and it would impact the neighborhood too much. She stated the wildlife in the area depend on the creek and she, along with the Homeowners' Association President, would hate to see anything happen to the wildlife. They would like for the Park Board to not consider this proposal.

Michael Loop (4323 E. Mt. Vernon) asked if there was any park property being sold to a private corporation at this time.

Frye responded there was no offer on the table.

Loop questioned whether any property for parks or golf land had been sold.

Ingle commented that Linwood had been sold.

Kupper stated that Linwood went from one government agency to another and the City acquired three new parks.

Loop stated that he was afraid that the Park Board was setting a precedence of losing land. He also stated that this proposal would change the aesthetics of the area and he is not in favor of the plan.

Mark Wedman (4301 E. Mt. Vernon) stated his home faces the golf course with a beautiful view. He is concerned with crime. He noted there is a lot of low income housing in the area and does not see how another commercial development on green space could help these families out because there are studies that green areas/parks make a huge difference in crime. He stated he thinks the Board is setting a precedence and that maybe they should just put in a casino instead. If the Park Board is going to sell out, they might as well go for it. He stated he could not imagine losing the corner for a commercial site and that it would not be good for the community.

Greg Farris stated that he is on the Golf Committee and the only reason the Park Board is looking at the proposal is because the committee sent it to the Board. The Committee was contemplating another fee increase and looking at revenue options for the golf system. They knew this offer was floating around for months and thought the Park Board should hear the offer, then send it to a DAB meeting for a presentation with pictures and then bring it back to the Board to make an informed decision. The courses still have financial challenges and they cannot just continue to raise the cost of playing golf. It is an enterprise fund and does not receive tax money to operate. The Committee looked at this infusion of cash as an opportunity to help with the debt service issue. If it is not enough money when the Board reviews an offer, then that is something to consider. If it is worthwhile, then that should be considered also. The offer came to the Committee first because they wanted to make sure it made sense before sending it to the Board of Park Commissioners.

Frye stated that he did not think there was an actual offer made.

Farris stated there was no actual offer. The Committee came up with a number that they felt would be a minimum they would consider.

Hillman stated the Golf Committee had discussed the offer as an offer, but it was a little fuzzy.

Kupper clarified that it was an idea that was brought forward as an opportunity when they were looking at finances. "What if someone were to bring an offer forward? How would we respond to it?"

Hillman asked what the number was that the Committee felt would be acceptable.

Farris stated the Committee thought there was no way they could look at an offer less than \$1 to \$1.4 million.

Frye stated they might be getting a little ahead of themselves.

Johnny Stevens (8120 Killarney Court) stated that he plays at Clapp and does not see how they can put a commercial business on the corner without destroying the course. He felt this was ultimately creating the demise of Clapp Park and inviting trouble with this type of business.

Karen Smith (2240 S. Crestway) stated she lives south of Clapp Park and people in the neighborhood and the area are not in favor of the proposal. This issue came up a couple of years ago when they proposed closing Clapp Park and they had nearly 300 people appear at a meeting to state they did not want it to happen. If the Park Board decides to sell it, they want the money to come back into Clapp Park and not go to other golf courses. The land was originally given to the City by a family for a park and golf course and she does not think they would want a commercial business there.

Frye noted there was no other public comment and brought the issue back to the Board. He stated the Board would hear later from the Golf Division regarding numbers. He stated that two years ago when the Board started the process, they looked at struggling courses, rounds were down and there was debt. They did a round of public meetings and the public will was to keep Clapp open. There were ideas for ways to improve Clapp with course improvements and they have put in capital improvements. There is now interest from a private enterprise. When looking at numbers for 2013, they are where they were in 2011. He stated that the Board has to be responsible to the citizens and maintain the course. The Board should at least listen objectively to the possible offer and they do not have to act on it. He felt the Board owed it to the tax payers to listen to the idea as it could be irresponsible not to allow the opportunity to be presented a little more in depth.

Allen stated he was open to listen, but there needs to be more dialogue and more facts need to be presented on the table. He appreciated what was said by the neighbors. However, in order to make a sound decision he would like everything possible in front of the Board.

Hieger stated the Board could not stop them from making an offer.

Kupper added the Board could simply tell them it is not for sale.

Hillman stated he looked forward to getting more information to share with the Board. He asked if they could find a water source that would sustain the operation because he was concerned the lack of water would doom this park and make it the least profitable park. He could see in another few years it could become a senior center campus and he was not sure he wanted that. He would like to understand the water source better and the actual offer better and the cost from developing the park into something nicer. He felt that the Board should know if they cannot cover the cost of the development with dedicated funds from the sale.

Frye stated he was hearing that as a board they are fine to hear offers and they should start here before it goes to a DAB. Then, if there is something that merits consideration, the Board could recommend to Councilman Clendenin to put the issue on his DAB agenda. If the Board does not have a desire to move forward, then there is no reason to go to the DAB.

**Motion by Frye, second by Allen, IT WAS VOTED 4-1 to instruct City staff to pursue dialogue with the prospect for the proposal at Clapp (4-1, Hillman opposed).**

### **Item 3: Continuation of Prior Business**

Frye stated there was no prior business on the agenda.

Hillman asked Kupper for an update on his meeting with Police and Fire regarding the river codes.

Kupper responded they are going to work on that this year. At this time there is no document to bring forth for review, but once they have the first draft of a new ordinance it will be brought to the Board. He

stated it is on the radar, but that the first opportunity will probably be June before it is brought to the Board. They have to review all state statutes as they relate to the ordinance. When the ordinance was put into place, there was a law enforcement arm of the Park Commission to enforce the statutes. That is no longer the case and they have to work with Fire to rescue citizens and Police to enforce the statutes and ordinances. He anticipates June being the first opportunity to have a cohesive draft for the Board to review.

Kupper stated that on the next day at the City Council meeting, they had an item on the agenda seeking approval for the FLAP Grant. A couple of years prior, they had an opportunity to get federal dollars to improve the K-96 bike path running through Chisholm Creek Park as well as the adapter from K-96 to the Great Plains Nature Center (GPNC). The grant was awarded with \$970,000 to be invested in Chisholm Creek Park to rebuild the bike paths and connector section from the street to the GPNC. It was more money than anticipated and the Department will only have to put up 20% of the improvement dollars. That was already established with the City Council and they were just waiting for approval of the grant which they got. He was hopeful that the City Council would agree to the grant.

Hillman stated he hoped they were working with Scott Lindebak to reduce the flooding that goes through the park and the need for more retention ponds.

Kupper responded that would not be addressed because this grant is strictly for bike paths. No water flow or runoff issues will be addressed with this grant money.

#### **Item 4A: Recreation Update (Karen Holmes/Mark Lowry)**

Kupper introduced Mark Lowry as the Recreation Supervisor at Orchard Recreation Center.

Lowry discussed the Night with Santa that took place on December 3 at Century II. They had approximately 6,700 participants and 200 volunteers working. There were several local sponsors such as Taco Shop and Prairie Pines.

Kupper noted that they received 18 nice trees from Prairie Pines.

Lowry stated they had several games and activities for kids as well as a "Letters to Santa" station. All letters written to Santa received responses. They also partnered with Waterwalk who provided carriage rides and face painters.

Kupper stated they hope to expand the partnership with Waterwalk next year.

Lowry stated the fully decorated trees were given away to needy families.

Claycomb asked how many participants they had last year.

Lowry responded they had approximately 6,000 last year. He added that they had great weather this year and last year.

Kupper stated this was the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Night with Santa.

#### **Item 4B: Updates from Director and President**

Frye stated he would like to get monthly reports on attendance at recreation centers similar to the golf reports so the Board can see how well recreation is doing.

Kupper responded that he would try to get that information for the Board. He then stated that he thought the Board would be interested to see where the recreation customers come from so he distributed a zip code map with handwritten numbers to show how many people come from particular zip codes. Zip code 67235 has 439 participants where there are no recreation assets. And there are an inordinate number of participants from north of K-96. The map did not include numbers from Derby, Haysville or Andover. Of the 15,000 participants in the database, this is a big chunk of them.

Frye stated that during the recreation meetings the question was raised whether participants living outside of the city limits should pay a premium.

Claycomb noted that Derby had just abolished their out of city premium.

Kupper added that Derby had just reopened their newly renovated center.

Hillman asked if the recreation software is able to track where patrons come from that use fields like Stryker.

Kupper responded if they come through a City program like football or softball, they can track the numbers.

Frye stated that he wants to stay ahead of it to be prepared. While he loves the recreation updates, he needs hard evidence.

Kupper stated he would get the numbers for the Board.

Frye moved on to Golf. The end of year numbers are in and rounds compared to 2012 were down 13% in 2013. They were back down to 2011 numbers. However, 13% down is lower than the national average in this area. December was a poor month being down 43%, but this only affected the percentage by 1%. Revenue is down 11% compared to 2012. Expenses and encumbrances are down. And they added a new line for assets acquired for the year to include golf carts, mowers, and a maintenance vehicle that are not capital expenditures.

Kupper stated there were still able to replace mowers.

Claycomb asked if in the past, they were in expenditures.

Kupper responded yes.

Hillman asked if they were able to make the debt payment.

Hendricks responded yes.

Kupper added that they still had a 10% reserve. They are hoping that they do not have a bad start like 2013, but they have enough in reserves to pay expenses.

Hieger asked if the youth golf league was declining. He asked about the trends.

Hendricks responded that he talked with marketing people in November. They sell approximately 40 youth passes and 800 senior passes. There are between 200 to 220 other passes sold. They have made a change to the youth pass reducing it from \$125 to \$75 to try to increase sales. They also added a young adult pass for ages 18-23 for \$150. They will offer junior clinics through the recreation centers that has not been done in the past. They hope to capture kids who have not been introduced to golf in the past.

Hillman asked if they could include a golf swing monitor for the winter months.

Allen asked about an indoor driving range.

Hendricks responded that there was no facility to accommodate that yet. Kupper and he have discussed doing something indoor next winter.

Kupper stated they still beat the regional numbers by a significant margin. He stated that Hendricks and the golf staff are doing a great job drawing golfers to the courses along with the marketing staff.

Frye noted that the Valley Center Recreation Commission is considering building a 9-hole course. So the City loses Echo Hills as a competitor, but gains another.

Claycomb noted that expenditures were up this year.

Kupper responded that was because they were fully staffed with the exception of the Division Manager.

Hendricks added that all full time staff positions were filled.

Hieger noted that his company was in the process of recruiting new engineers and they were very excited about the local golf courses.

Frye asked how the capital improvements were going.

Hendricks responded that the weather had shut down construction.

Hieger asked if Hendricks could meet the Board at Clapp.

Frye noted that Mike Solomon is the Pro at Clapp and he could give him a call.

Frye noted that the roof for the Fresh Air Baby Camp structure was to be completed by April or May. They had also met their goal of \$150,000 in fundraising.



Kupper added that they have all the interior materials donated and are ready to go after they finish the roof. They plan to have it done by the summer.

Frye noted that there would be a volunteer work day on January 18 from 10am-1pm. It was nice to see they are making progress and on track.

Frye stated that the February Board of Park Commissioners' meeting will be on February 10, 2014, because February 17, 2014, is a federal holiday. They will need to have an agenda item for the bylaw change.

Harlenske noted they will probably still have to move the March meeting date because the bylaw change will have to be approved by City Council.

Hillman gave an update on Watson Park stating they had expanded the review process from the initial report and the train continues to be the hot item. A consultant who looked at the train recommended going with a propane engine because there was new technology that made it better, safer, cleaner, quieter and easier to maintain. The consultant also recommended more carriers/seats.

Frye asked if the train was the one from Joyland.

Kupper responded no and that the Park Department owned the train.

Hillman stated the new carrier could cost approximately \$46,000.

**Item 5: Adjourn**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:15pm.

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**Bryan Frye, President**

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**Christina Butler, Clerk**